

Annual Report
Brent Parking Service
2013/2014



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A requirement set out in the Statutory Guidance provided pursuant to the Traffic Management Act 2004 is for Local Authorities to produce and publish an annual report on parking enforcement activities.
- 1.2. Brent is committed to providing a fair, consistent and transparent enforcement Parking Service. Publishing clear statistical and financial information will help achieve these objectives. This report includes information about the levels of parking enforcement activity for the period 2013/2014, the income and expenditure recorded in our 'parking account' and how subsequent parking surplus has been spent or allocated.

2. Context

- 2.1. Demand for parking in the London Borough of Brent, as with other London boroughs, is extraordinarily high. Over time the Council, in consultation with residents, has introduced a number of measures to control the demand for kerb space. The south-eastern part of the borough which is closest to central London, is controlled through Controlled Parking Zones, where residents have the option of purchasing resident permits. Other parts of the borough also have residential controls, typically in and around busy high street locations, or near railway stations (where there may be a demand for parking from commuters). One of the key features in the London Borough of Brent, is the presence of Wembley Stadium.; On capacity crowd event days the local area receives an extremely high number of visitors placing large pressures on local parking and for this reason, the area surrounding the stadium also has parking controls to preserve parking for local residents. To support these controls the Council must handle applications for permits, assess eligibility, and despatch permits.
- 2.2. The Council also provides on-street and off-street parking places which may be free-of-charge, pay and display, or cashless , with supplementary customer tools including such as parking apps and web bookings. This ensures that parking is available for visitors to town centres and other destinations to support economic activity in the Borough
- 2.3. Other services are provided in order to meet the parking needs of other users, such as business permits, parking bay suspensions and dispensations. Parking Bay suspensions, as an example, facilitate large deliveries to residential properties, and allow residents to move into or away from the borough with as little inconvenience as possible.

3. Control and enforcement

- 3.1. The controls and services the Council provides need to be enforced to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses get the benefits that are intended. To meet this requirement, the Council deploys Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who monitor for vehicles not abiding by local parking regulations.
- 3.2. As well as managing Controlled Parking Zones and local parking schemes, the Council also provides important enforcement of other parking restrictions to bring about motorist compliance. The list below is not exhaustive, but the work undertaken by the Service includes:

- 3.2.1. School Keep Clear enforcement. School Keep Clear markings (yellow zig-zag lines outside of school entrances) are important for road safety. The Council monitors compliance with these 'no-stopping' restrictions using a combination of CEOs and Mobile CCTV enforcement vehicles, with the intention of maintaining and improving road safety outside schools. In 2013/2014, the Parking Service also visited some primary schools in the borough to allow local children to see some of the enforcement equipment used, and allow children to directly partake in campaigns educating motorists about the need to eliminate poor driving outside schools.
- 3.2.2. Yellow Line Enforcement. Yellow lines are enforced by both CEOs and CCTV camera operators. Yellow lines are found in areas where waiting/waiting and loading are not permitted during some parts/all of the day. They are located on parts of the highway which may create a safety hazard if parking was permitted, or in locations where parking simply is not suitable due to the carriageway width or high traffic volumes. Enforcement plays an important role in ensuring the free movement of traffic along the borough's road network, and the prevention of potential traffic accidents.
- 3.2.3. Footway Enforcement. The demand for parking in Brent is high, and on occasions where parking facilities are not immediately available, some motorists inconsiderately park on the footway (pavement). Parking on the footway causes problems for the visually impaired, wheelchair users, and people with prams or buggies. It can cause costly damage to the paving stones (often creating trip hazards for residents). It can also damage utilities located beneath the footway. Footway enforcement is therefore a critical local service for some of the borough's residents. There are some footways where parking is permitted on residential streets which are too narrow for bays to be fully located on the carriageway. Details of this may be found on the Parking Service's webpage (www.brent.gov.uk).
- 3.2.4. Bus Lanes. The Service also provides the enforcement of bus lanes in the borough. The Council wishes to encourage sustainable forms of transport, and the Service therefore provides stringent enforcement of bus lanes in order to secure faster journey times for bus users.
- 3.2.5. Moving Traffic and Box Junctions. Yellow Box Junctions, prohibited turns, and no-entry signs are all examples of moving traffic violations actively enforced by the service. Such restrictions are in place to ease congestion on the borough's roads, and improve road safety.
- 3.3. Parking Administration.
The Council also provides many administrative functions which ensure that our residents receive a high standard of service, and are treated in a fair and transparent way.
- 3.3.1. Telephone Services.
We provide services over the telephone for our customers, helping customers to buy permits and services, or advising customers on parking enforcement activities. Our telephone help-line is available between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Working with the Council's new contractor, Serco, the telephone service has dramatically improved as the year has progressed.
- 3.3.2. Consulting residents, businesses and elected members on proposed changes to the service and new schemes.

Parking controls and regulation receive a lot of attention from all stakeholders, particularly in respect of parking charges and parking enforcement. Officers spend time in consulting residents and businesses to gain their views on projects we think may benefit the local community, through formal decision making processes, statutory processes and through feedback from complaints. We are continually listening to the views of our residents and have a long list of projects we wish to take forward as a direct result of feedback. One of the major successes in 2013/2014 was the implementation of a new parking tariff for cashless and pay and display parking. This substantially reduced parking charges across the board and also introduced a very low tariff to cater for short-stay parking offering users a better deal. It also introduced a price differential to encourage the uptake of cheaper cashless parking rather than pay and display services.

3.3.3. Handling requests for parking/traffic enforcement.

It is often difficult for the Council to get the balance right between providing too much enforcement and too little. Nevertheless, we aim to provide the right balance, and information provided by members of the public helps us to achieve this. As examples, in 2013/2014 the Council actively increased the enforcement of weight restrictions in Willesden Green, and footway parking in Sudbury Town following feedback from local residents and their elected members.

3.3.4. Monitoring the activities of our contractors.

The Parking Service would not be as successful without the contribution of our key suppliers who are specialists in the industry and offer residents the greatest value for money. Following an innovative joint procurement exercise with the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow in 2013-14 the three boroughs awarded a contract to Serco Ltd, who bid to provide services with the most economically advantageous tender. The contract with our previous long term supplier, APCOA, came to an end in July 2013. The procurement process was very successful and by the 2015-16 financial year will be delivering an annual saving of £850,000 per annum. The contract has also provided new vehicles and equipment for the service, a new operational base and car pound, efficient working methods, and enhancements to the customer experience.

3.3.5. Responding to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and Representations.

The Council provides a transparent and fair parking enforcement service. If motorists are unhappy with a PCN they have received, we provide a service which allows them to challenge the PCN. Should they remain unhappy, they may make statutory representations which we will consider. Should a motorist remain unhappy with our decision, they may make an appeal to an independent adjudicator who will make an impartial decision based upon the merits of the case in question. The Service provides highly trained, experienced and efficient workforce to handle such queries, with the aim of providing firm but fair enforcement.

4. Statistics, Financial Information and Monitoring

4.1. An important purpose of the Annual Report is to provide statistical and financial information relating to all aspects of the enforcement operation including the number of PCNs issued, the number of PCNs paid, the income & expenditure related to the enforcement activities recorded in the “parking account” and how any surplus has been or will be spent.

4.2. Account Summary 2013/2014

Parking related activity carried out by the Service in 2013/2014 generated a surplus of £7.9m. The largest contribution to the surplus was through the enforcement of parking and traffic regulations and the sale of parking permits.

	Expenditure (£000)	Income (£000)
Parking Administration	1,157.89	-78.95
Parking Projects	156.80	0.00
On-Street Pay and Display	263.27	-3,329.70
Off-Street Pay and Display	115.93	-434.15
Parking Enforcement and Permits	4,751.64	-10,067.71
Traffic Enforcement	441.82	-891.07
TOTAL	6,887.35	-14,801.57
Net Surplus		-7,914.22

The volume of work carried out by the service to ensure parking and traffic compliance and to meet customer demand for products and services generated a surplus. The surplus was used in order to fund other activities related to the public highway.

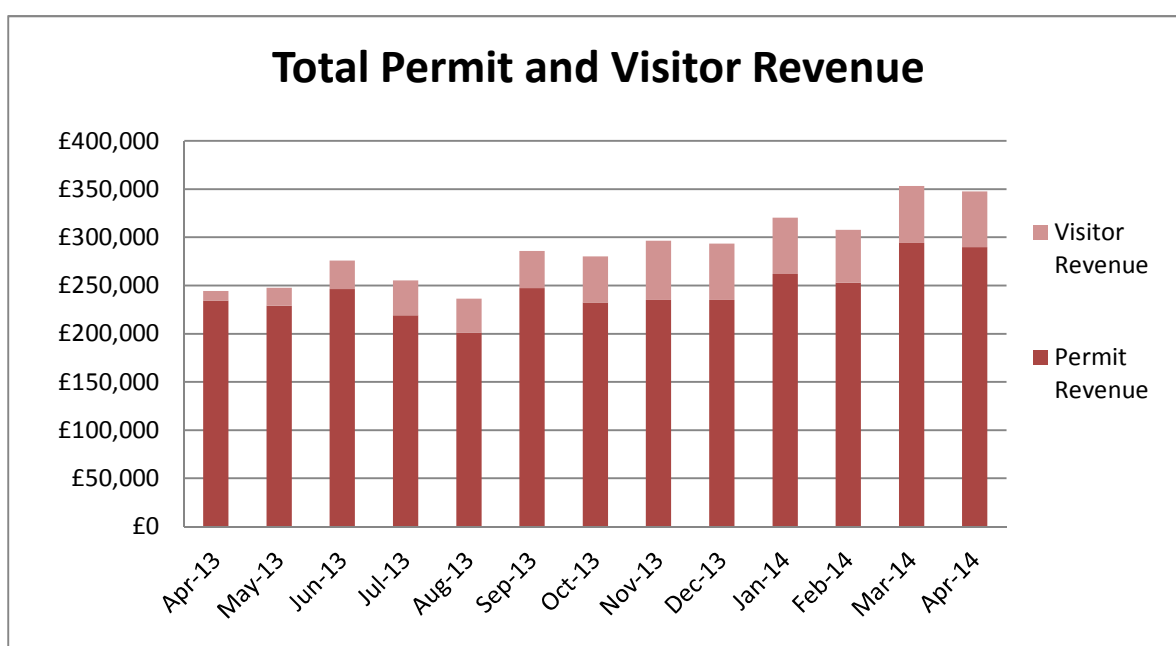
Transfer of surplus

	Transfer (£000)
Transportation schemes	2491.24
Street lighting	2090.76
Environmental improvement	3332.22
Balance	Nil

Transportation Schemes have an intrinsic relationship with parking demand and congestion. Some of the schemes implemented in 2013/2014 directly impacted on the provision of parking services (new parking bays and changes to operational hours), whilst others have more of an indirect impact (altering the flow of traffic, refurbishing shopping parades). Street lighting also has a direct impact on the highway, and the boroughs roads continue to be lit in accordance with the British Standard, ensuring that visibility is high where it needs to be. There is also a direct relationship between Street Lighting and the Service; many of the borough’s parking/traffic signs are illuminated in order to comply with statutory requirements. Environmental improvements includes the management and maintenance of some of the Boroughs parks and open space.

4.3. Parking Permits

The Council launched a new parking permit system in the 2012/2013 year, although the majority of our customers migrated to the new database in the 2013/2014 year. This migration of customers to the new service was prompted in part through the expiry of annually renewed resident permits but also through the gradual decrease in scratch card circulation. The closure of counter services and transition to online based services was met with a mixed reception, although as the 2013/2014 financial year came to a close, many of the challenges posed by the roll-out of a completely new method of providing the service had been successfully overcome; and this is demonstrated in the charts below. Whilst the Service has captured an enormous amount of feedback, both positive and negative, on how the service is provided, the new online permit system is now reaching a steady business state, providing a platform for developing enhancements.



The Council now successfully processes (on average) 35,000 customer transactions per month using the new permit system. Those transactions are spread over 20 different products, as the Council strive to meet the varying needs of local residents; and the most popular products continue to be Resident Parking Permits (11%), and Visitor Parking (76%). Resident Parking Permits are still priced according to vehicle emissions; the most environmentally friendly vehicles may still park in the borough for free. Resident's also continue to have the option of purchasing annual, six month, or three month permits, and the Council plan to make the service even more flexible and will soon introduce 24 month permits.

The volumes of use, and variety of choice provided by the new permit system ultimately demonstrate the success of the service, and that the Council are providing a flexible service to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.

4.4. Visitor Parking Use

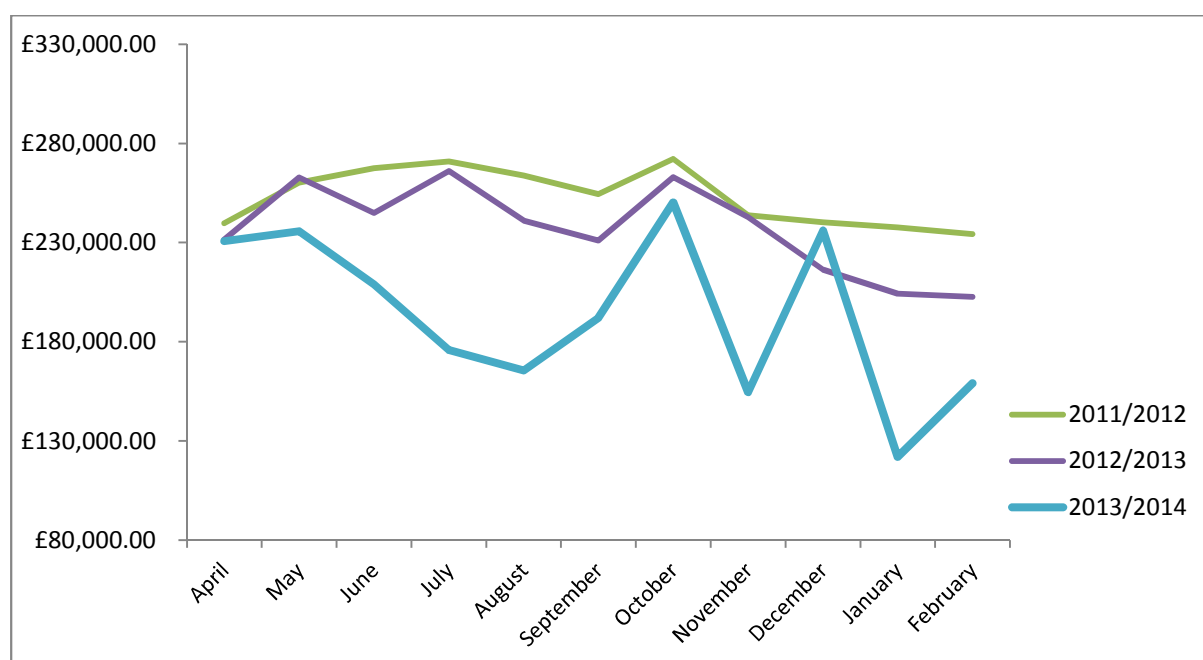
One very visible change has been the removal of the sale of visitor scratch cards. This service, once provided through parking shops, has now been replaced with an online service whereby residents may credit an account from which visitor parking may be drawn by either logging onto the Council's website, sending an SMS, or telephoning the service. Concerns have been raised, in particular, by some residents who may not wish to/be able to use the technology. This feedback was considered by officers and members, who have temporarily extended the life of Visitor Household Permits (which are non-vehicle specific) whilst working up new proposals for a Carer's Permit (scheduled to be developed in 2014/2015). Responding to resident feedback, the Council also extended the validity of existing visitor scratch cards rather than proceed with a scratch card exchange scheme.



The chart above shows the transition to the new visitor parking system, which now attracts over 30,000 transactions per month. We have noted that as the system has matured, the average credit 'top-up' made by customers has gradually increased; we believe that this is representative of increased consumer confidence in the system now that regular users have become accustomed to it.

4.5. On-Street Pay and Display sales

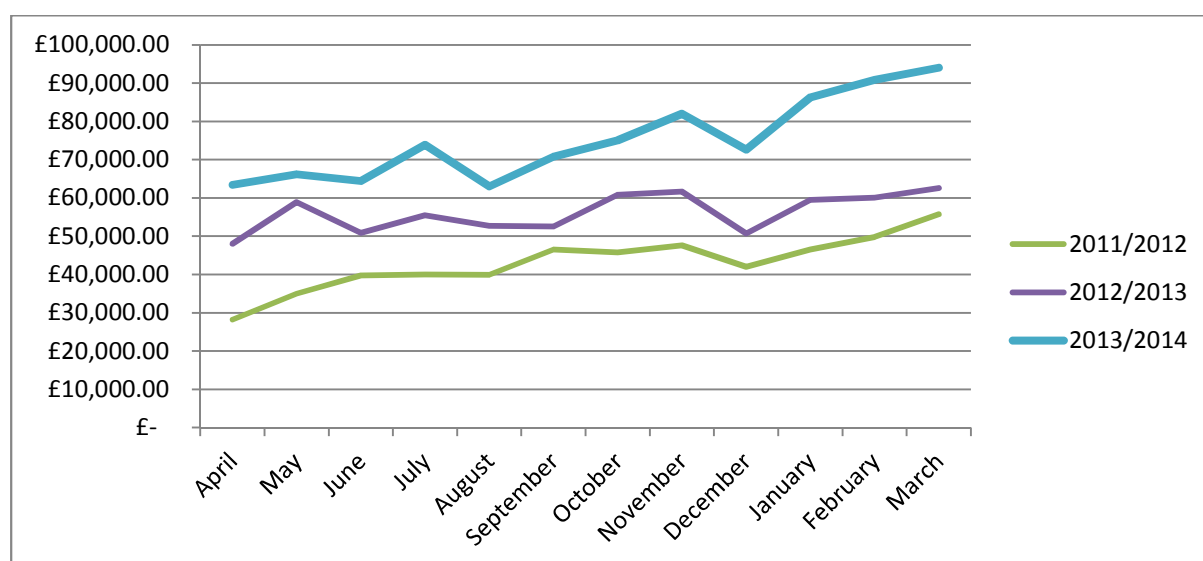
Use of pay and display parking decreased for the third consecutive year, with a greater number of customers opting for more modern services available through the Council's cashless parking providers, RingGo. The Council still has 731 pay and display locations in the borough, although it is becoming clear that as demand for these services falls, some areas no longer require as many pay and display machines. We are monitoring customer trends closely with a view to rationalising pay and display stock.



One of the major changes brought about in 2013/2014, was the introduction of a new parking tariff in October 2013. These changes came about following lengthy consultation with elected members, who had longstanding ambitions to introduce lower parking tariffs, particularly for short-stay parking. The result was for the Council to propose lower tariffs at all price points, and an ultra-low tariff for short-stay parking (just 20 pence for 15 minutes). The changes also introduced a second tariff for users of the cashless parking service, in recognition of the fact that the operating costs of a cashless service are markedly lower than a pay and display service.

4.6. On-Street Cashless Sales

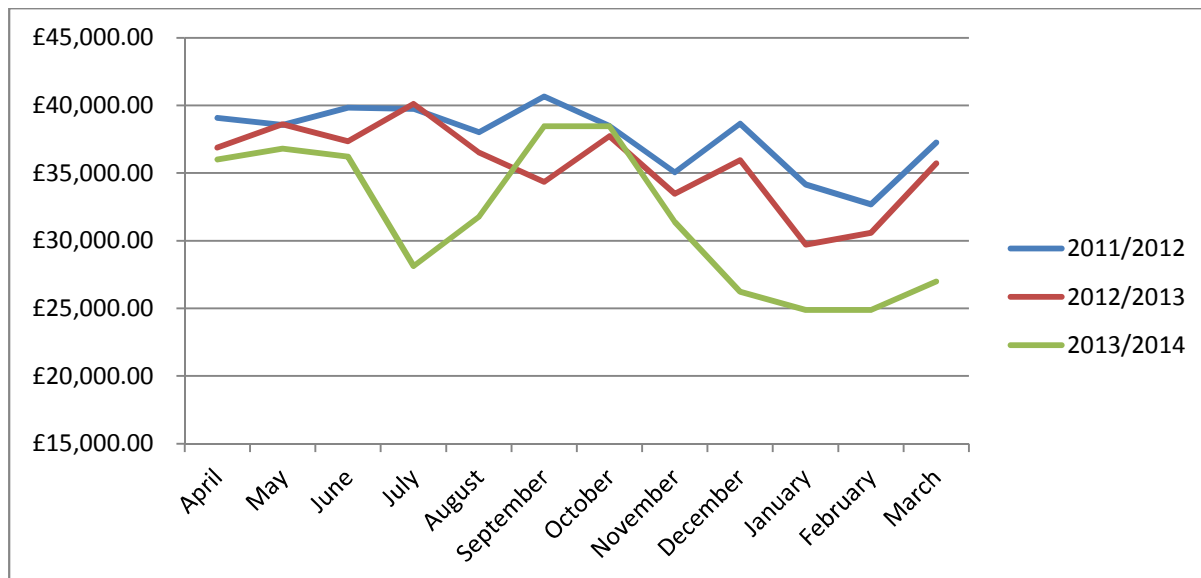
The demand for cashless parking services continued to grow in 2013/2014, with a surge in demand for the service following the launch of the new cheaper cashless tariff (October 2013). The service is becoming extremely popular with 37% of on-street sales revenues received via cashless transactions (June 2014). A number of benefits go with use of the system, including the mobile app provided by RingGo (which direct users to the nearest bay), being able to pay to park from a remote location, or from inside your vehicle together with text reminders when parking sessions are due to expire.



The above chart demonstrates the continued growth of cashless parking over the last three consecutive years, with a surge in demand prompted by the launch of new parking tariffs in October 2013.

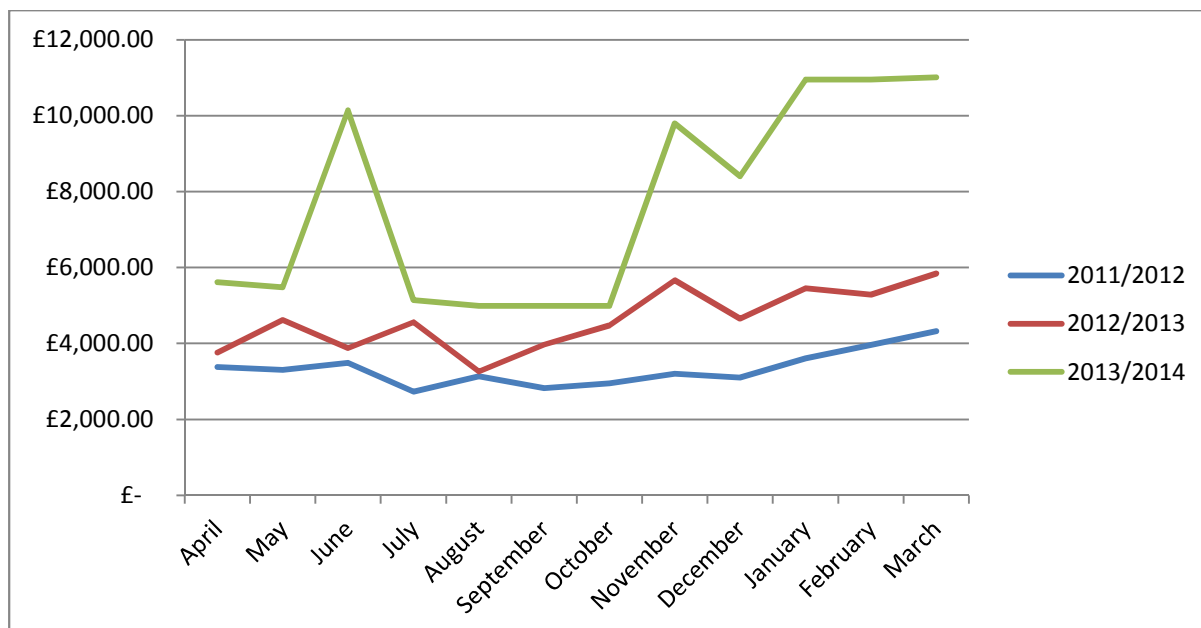
4.7 Off-Street Pay and Display Sales

Off-street (car park) pay and display use is also falling, although the volumes associated with off-street sales are markedly lower than on-street sales. The trend is notably similar to on-street parking preferences with a shift away from traditional payment for parking.



4.8 Off-Street Cashless Sales

As with on-street trends, the popularity of cashless parking is also increasing in car parks. Consumer trends off-street are broadly in line with those seen on-street.



4.9. Enforcement

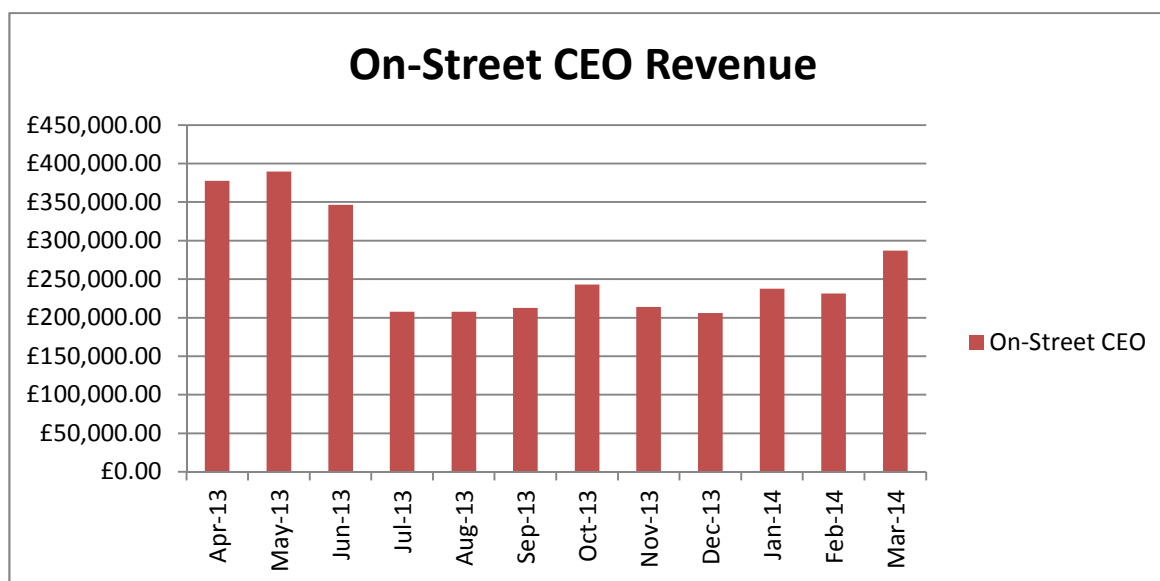
The transition to the new parking Contractor, Serco, in July 2013, had an initial major impact on service volumes, which steadied towards the end of 2013/2014. The competitive re-letting of the parking contract stimulated major operational changes for the Service:

- A large workforce transferred from the last Contractor, APCOA, to the new Contractor, Serco;
- A new parking processing system was introduced by Serco;
- A new car pound and operational base was implemented by Serco, replacing the old car pound in Wembley with a new facility in Park Royal;
- Some services were shared with other London Authorities. The new parking contract was jointly tendered by the London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hounslow. This generated contractual savings where some of the managerial overheads for the contract are now shared. Further to this, all three councils now have initial correspondence (challenges), handled by Serco;
- New technology was introduced by Serco, with new mobile CCTV vehicles fitted with ANPR devices.

The re-letting of the contract offered up an annual saving of £850k on the baseline expenditure. The saving generated through the tendering exercise, a 15% saving, is a major cost reduction for a service which has always been outsourced.

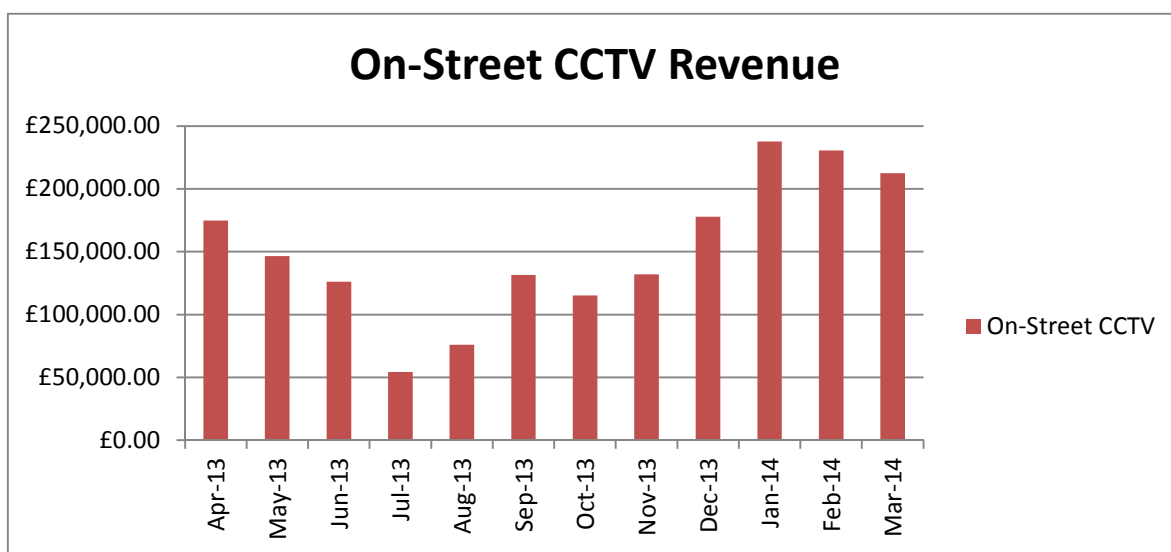
4.9.1. On-Street CEO Revenue

On-street CEO enforcement revenue decreased from over £350,000 per month in the first quarter, to just over £200,000 during the supplier handover period (July 2013). Since the handover date, the on-street revenue has been on a steady incline to almost £300,000 per month in March 2014. The transition to a new Contractor in July 2013 resulted in a lower volume of PCN issuance (and therefore lower revenues), although toward the end of the financial year the issuance volume exceeded those of previous years setting a solid foundation for the remainder of the contract.



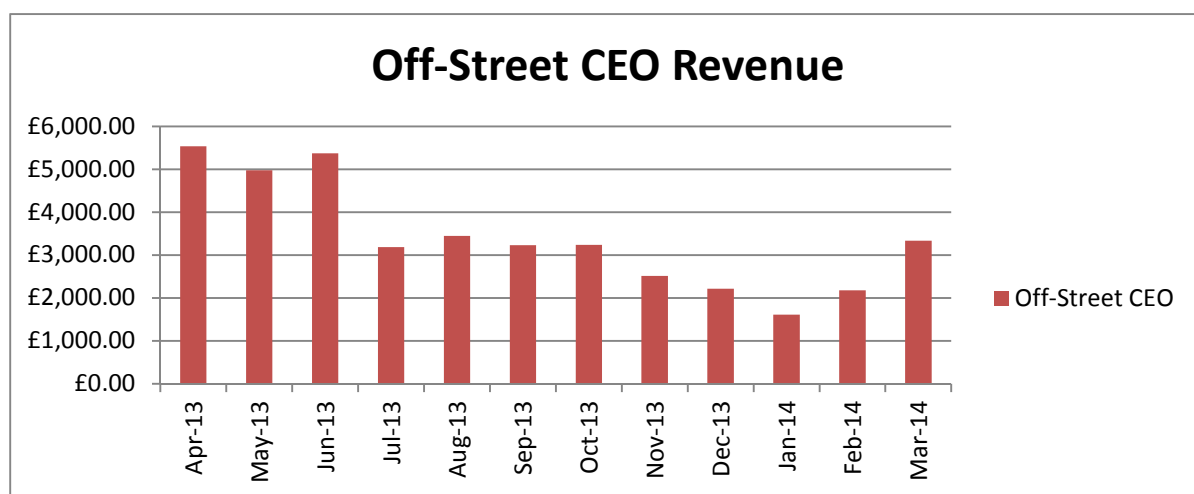
4.9.2. On-Street CCTV Revenue

As with CEO enforcement, CCTV enforcement was also impacted upon, not only by the transition to a new contractor, but also by the transition to a new enforcement suite. The Serco contract began in a new facility provided in Brent Civic Centre, with the previous service provided from an enforcement suite in Pyramid House, Wembley. Commencing a new service from a new enforcement suite provided some initial teething issues, but these were fairly insignificant considering the scale of the project. The resultant service is now more effective than ever before, with record numbers of parking contraventions being identified from the control room.



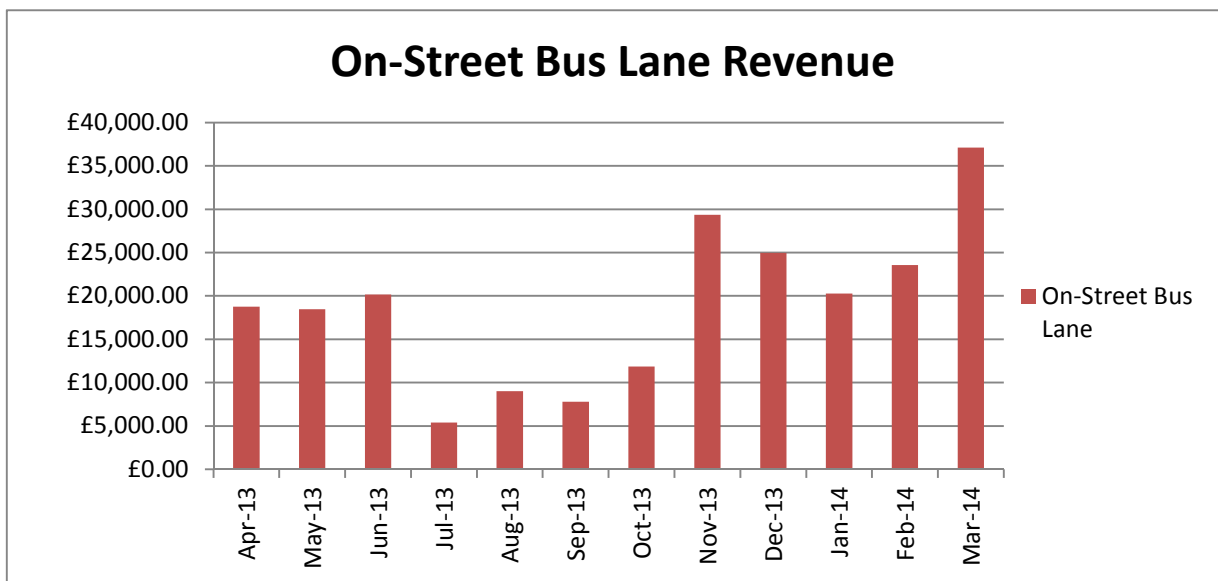
4.9.3. Off-street CEO Revenue

The volumes of issuance off-street, by Civil Enforcement Officers, are extremely low in comparison with on-street enforcement. Issuance volumes are lower than traditional issuance volumes.



4.9.4. Bus Lane Enforcement Revenue

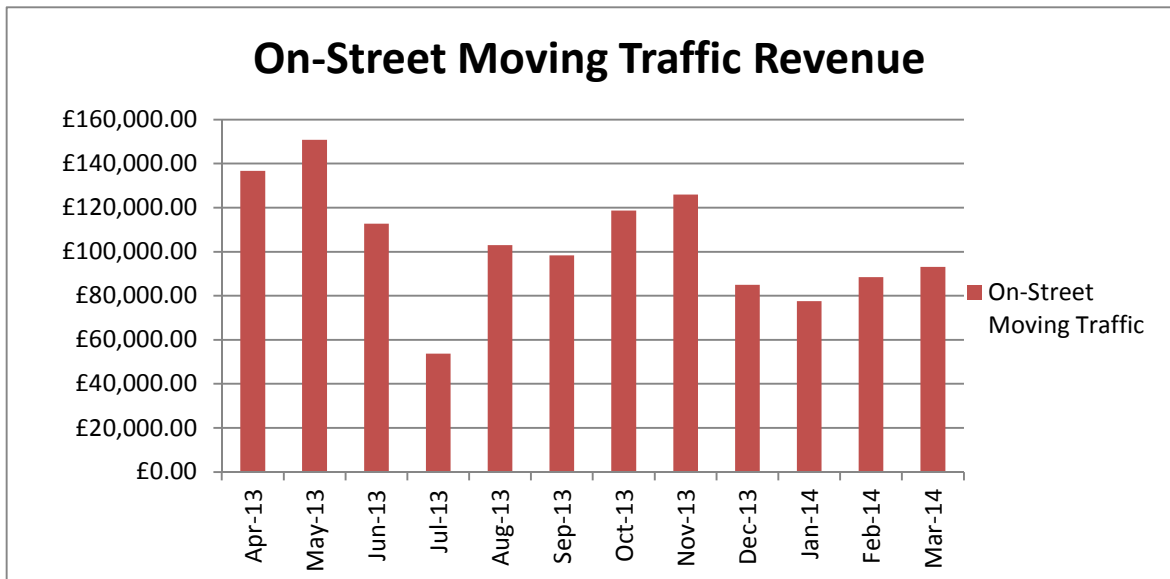
Bus Lane revenues grew dramatically towards the end of the 2013/2014 year as a result of the deployment of unattended camera systems. Unattended camera systems ensure that enforcement is concentrated on a specific restriction for the duration of its operational hours. This means that the Council are now able to apply a zero tolerance enforcement regime to bring about bus lane compliance.



Officers will continue to monitor the effectiveness of unattended systems; should this continue to prove to be an effective method of bringing about compliance, there may be scope to increase the Council's asset inventory.

4.9.5. Moving Traffic Enforcement Revenue

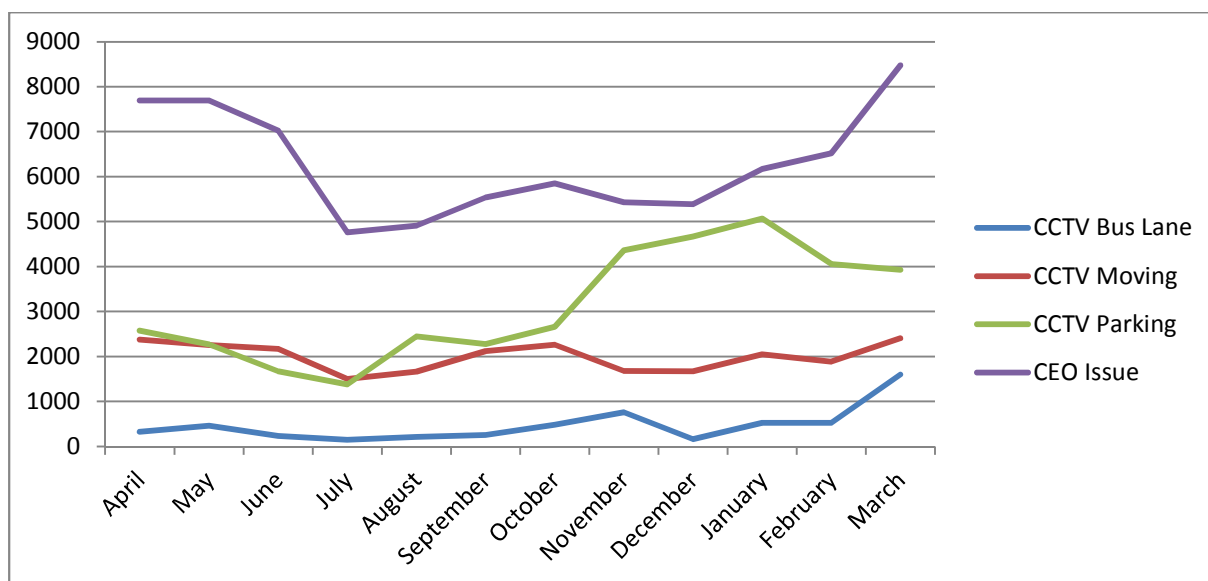
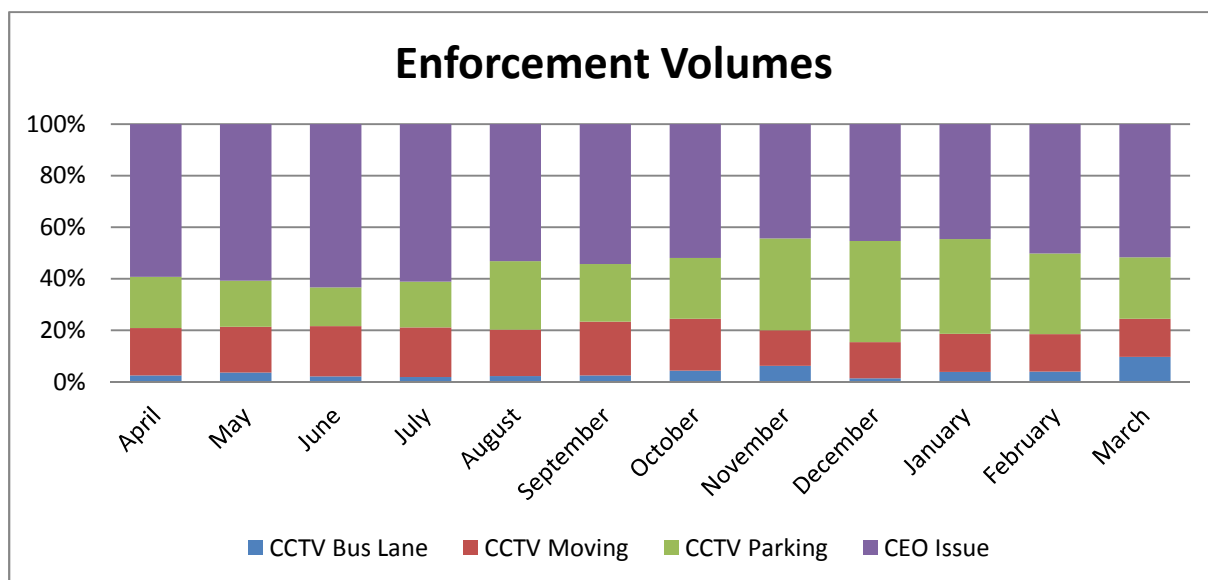
As indicated by the chart below, revenue generated through the enforcement of moving traffic (mainly box junction) violations, dropped slightly from historical revenues following the award of the contract. An increased level of parking enforcement, and bus lane enforcement, and potential increase in compliance, explains the movement in these revenues.



4.9.6. Enforcement Volumes

The chart below breaks down where the service issued Penalty Charge Notices by the different means of enforcement. Significantly, a shift can be seen in the percentage of issuances via CCTV by approximately 10%.

This follows on from the new technology and methods introduced by new parking Contractor, Serco, and the increased capacity of the CCTV operation following the move to Brent Civic Centre. The method of identifying contraventions has changed in tandem with re-letting the main parking contract, with a reduction in the number of hours deployed on-street; the Council is maximising the use of available resource, seeking efficiencies through using existing camera infrastructure; and the Council are using modern method of identifying bus lane contraventions through the use of unattended camera systems.



4.9.7. Volume Comparison with Previous Years

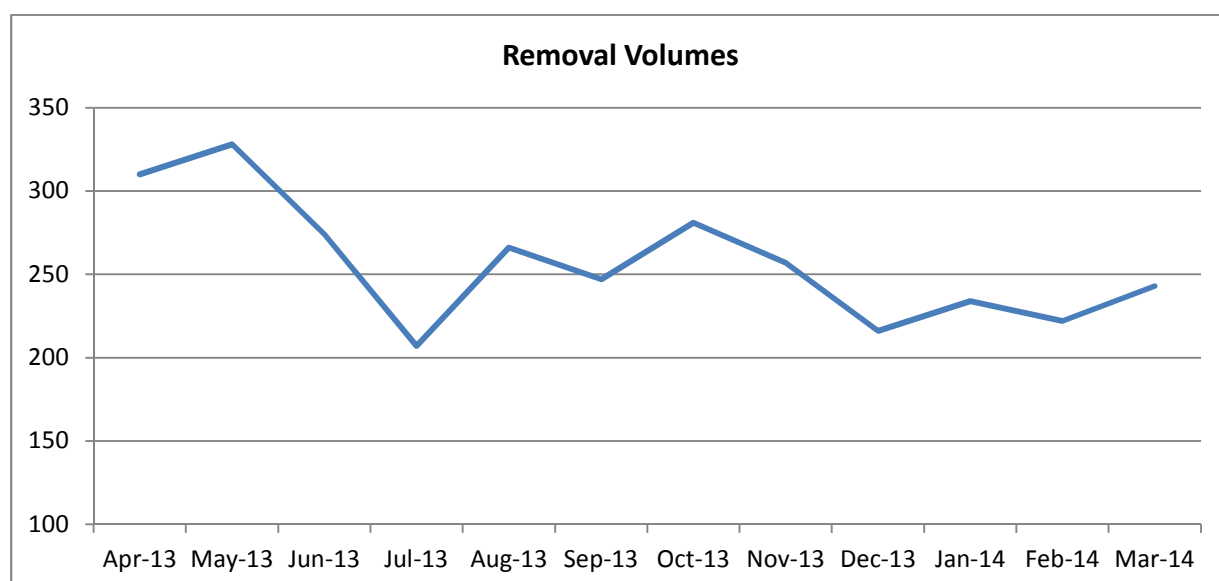
The total issuance volume for 2013/2014 was broadly in line with previous financial years, as demonstrated by the table below.

Significantly, the identification of bus lane contraventions rose to its highest level for four years, and the method of enforcing parking contraventions shifted from on-street Civil Enforcement Officers to CCTV cameras. This is also in line with previous trends, with an increase in CCTV parking contraventions and a decrease in on-street Civil Enforcement Officer issued contraventions.

	CEO	Removals (PCN)	Bus Lanes	Moving Traffic	CCTV Parking	Total
2010/2011	81,886	3,888	5,508	4,646*	1,000*	96,928
2011/2012	91,010	4,358	2,153	19,644	24,692	141,857
2012/2013	85,101	4,084	3,373	25,367	28,942	146,867
2013/2014	75,460	3,085	5,681	24,029	37,353	142,523

4.9.8. Vehicle Removals

The Council continued to provide a Vehicle Removal Service throughout 2013/14, impounding 3,085 vehicles found parked in contravention. This is a substantial drop in numbers in comparison with removal volumes in previous years, and can in part be attributed to the transition to the new Contractor, a new vehicle pound, and a reduction in on-street issuance.

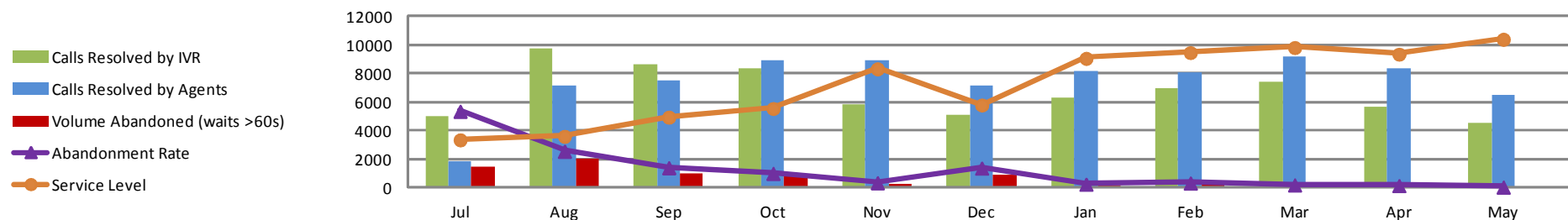


4.10 Telephone Services

The demand for telephone services rocketed following the launch of the online parking system, with customers requiring assistance in setting up and using their new online parking accounts. The heavy demand for the service at the commencement of the new parking contract (July 2013) resulted in a poor service. Neither the Council nor the contractor had anticipated such high demand meaning that capacity was not sufficient to be able to provide an acceptable level of service. Working with the new Contractor, Serco, the Council was able to rectify this problem and the service gradually improved over the course of the year, as is demonstrated below. Customers now enjoy a much improved telephone service.

Contact Centre (Aggregated)

	Part Month										
<u>Volumes</u>	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14
Total Calls Received	9907	20110	18007	18930	15734	13799	15238	15847	17625	14778	11738
Calls Resolved by IVR	4981	9764	8652	8318	5821	5073	6335	6941	7469	5695	4563
Calls Resolved by Agents	1863	7182	7512	8924	8884	7102	8200	8120	9166	8357	6485
Suspensions Voicemail/Ringbacks	52	149	116	80	29	28	25	14	21	21	24
Call Hang ups within SLA	1487	1023	686	745	686	638	466	503	772	557	612
Volume Abandoned (waits >60s)	1524	1992	1041	863	314	958	212	269	197	148	54
<u>Performance</u>	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14
Abandonment Rate	45.0%	21.7%	12.2%	8.8%	3.4%	11.9%	2.5%	3.2%	2.1%	1.7%	0.8%
Average Call Wait Time	06:15	04:19	02:47	02:18	01:03	02:49	00:49	00:51	00:39	00:42	00:24
Average Call Duration (excl wrap time)	04:52	05:14	05:06	04:57	04:22	04:43	04:30	04:28	04:06	04:12	03:59
Service Level	28.4%	30.4%	41.6%	46.6%	69.8%	48.7%	75.9%	79.2%	82.2%	78.4%	87.0%



4.9 Representations & Appeals

The Service continues to provide a firm, fair and customer focussed response to correspondence and telephone calls received.

Customers who feel that they have been unfairly issued with a Penalty Charge Notice may contest the charge by writing to the Council. The Council have a dedicated specialist team who will consider each case based upon its own merits. All statutory correspondence is handled within the statutory periods for response.

Should our customers remain dissatisfied with our decision, they may make an appeal to the independent adjudicator for parking fines, the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS) who will make an impartial decision on the case.

The annual report by the Chief Parking Adjudicator may be found on their website <http://www.patras.gov.uk/tmaadjudicators/aboutparkingadjudicators.htm>, and full appeal figures for all London authorities, can be found at <http://www.patras.gov.uk/about/annualreports.htm>.

Key appeals figures for LB Brent in 2013/2014 are detailed below:

Appeals 2013/2014

	Heard	Allowed	Not Contested	Refused	% Refused of heard
Parking Appeals	1125	606	445	519	46.13%
Bus Lane Appeals	23	13	10	10	43.48%
Moving Traffic Appeals	280	97	65	183	65.36%
Total	1428	716	520	712	49.86%